

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGE GRANT RECIPIENT FOR 1997: SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY BUILDER/DEVELOPER CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

Grant Recipient: EcoVillage Institute, Inc.
Grant Title: Sustainable Community Builder/Developer Certification Program
EPA Project Manager: Mindy Lemoine - lemoine.mindy@epa.gov
Organization Contact: Grady O'Rear, President
EcoVillage of Loudoun County, Virginia
1726 Shookstown Road
Frederick, MD 21702
Ph: 301-662-4646
Email: info@ecovillages.com
<http://www.ecovil.com/>
Project Period: 7/15/98 - 1/15/00
Affected Areas: Loudoun County, Virginia

INTRODUCTION AND PROJECT RATIONALE

Growth in the Washington, DC metropolitan area continues at the expense of once prosperous farms in the surrounding Virginia and Maryland countryside. The once natural landscape is rapidly being developed into town houses, strip malls and massive highways and parking lots, thus serving to isolate people from their communities and tying economic stability to the automobile and highway system.

The EcoVillage project of Loudoun County, Virginia hopes to demonstrate the value of harmonizing development with the environment in order to create stronger, healthier communities. This area consists of two 25-lot cohousing communities, each with a common house, situated on 180 acres of farmland and with easy access to surrounding areas via a nearby commuter train. Building and infrastructure will be designed using sustainable and energy efficient techniques, and an emphasis will also be placed on supporting organic farming and landscaping and supporting home-based occupations that promote a localized, sustainable economy. Throughout all stages, full participation is encouraged from future residents via a Sociocratic Decision Making Process.

The Sustainable Community Builder/Developer Certification Program will serve to train and certify the developer and all contractors and subcontractors working on the EcoVillage site. The overall objective of the program is to insure high quality standards and performance in the land development and construction process, and to influence development and building practices not only in this region but throughout the nation. Applicants will be required to attend and complete a comprehensive training program addressing sustainability, energy efficiency and healthy land development and building issues from the perspectives of the developer, builder, and subcontractor. Once applicants have completed training sessions and have met professional requirements, they may then apply to the Sustainable Community Builder/Developer Certification Board for certification. After the initial investment to develop program materials, the Sustainable Community Builder/Developer Certification Program will be self-supported through course fees.

SCOPE OF WORK

Sustainable Development Challenge Grant funds will go towards the development of program materials and to pilot the program. Program materials will include a course notebook for each participant and AV materials for course presentation. The longer-term goal is to make available the Sustainable Community

Builder/Developer Certification Program to builders, developers, contractors, planners, and architects nationwide. The program will first be offered in the Washington, DC area and then expanded through strategic partners, such as the local home builders associations. After the initial phase of program development, the program should be self-sustained through fees paid.

Specific project results include the training of builders, contractors, developer, planners, and others working on EcoVillage to ensure that high quality standards are met. A longer-term result will be training of builders and contractors after the initial EcoVillage training, after which the program will be funded through participation fees. Environmental results include improved energy efficiency and the use of renewable resources; automobile pollution avoided; wildlife habitats preserved, water and soil pollution avoided, etc. The inclusion of sustainable businesses and quality of life improvements are also of high priority. And the final result is project transferability to other communities through training and certification and active marketing of the program.

THE DESIGN TEAM

The Design Team is a collaboration of some of the nation's most renowned community planners, architects, engineers, and technical specialists in the field of sustainable design. It includes:

- Amory Lovins, Rocky Mountain Institute
- Greg Franta & Robert Berkebile, cofounders, the Committee on the Environment of the American Institute of Architects
- Harry Gordon, Architect & leader in energy-efficient and environmentally responsive design
- Pliny Fisk, cofounder, the Center for Maximum Building Potential
- Nancy Clanton, Building Engineer with expertise in lighting design
- Roger Courtenay, Landscape Architect
- Bill Neville, Community Planner
- Katherine McCamant & Charles Durrett, cofounders, the Cohousing Company

PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

Northern Virginia Planning District Commission

Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority

Energy Efficient Building Association

Virginia Power

Burt Hill Kosar Rittleman Associates

Solar Design Associates

Ensar Group

Berkebile Nelson Immenschuh McDowell Architects